

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 058 641

EA 003 957

AUTHOR Weinberg, Meyer
TITLE White Children in the Desegregation Process.
INSTITUTION California Univ., Riverside. Western Regional School
Desegregation Projects.
PUB DATE Nov 71
NOTE 3p.; Article appears in Intergroup Newsletter, Vol.
2, No. 1, Nov. 1971, p4-5
EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.65 HC-\$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *Academic Achievement; Caucasian Students;
*Educational Quality; *Interaction; Literature
Reviews; *Racial Attitudes; *School Integration

ABSTRACT

This report discusses some undesirable impacts that segregated education may have on white children and reviews literature that discusses beneficial effects experienced by white children in integrated schools. The advantages gained by the white children of desegregated schools are discussed under the headings of academic achievement, interracial relations, quality of interaction, and intellectual horizons. The report concludes that ample evidence exists from research and classroom experiences that desegregation can be helpful to children of all races. (Author/JF)

Nov. 1971

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRO-
DUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM
THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIG-
INATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPIN-
IONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY
REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDU-
CATION POSITION OR POLICY

WHITE CHILDREN IN THE DESEGREGATION PROCESS

by Meyer Weinberg

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Intergroup Newsletter is happy to announce that it has again acquired the services of Meyer Weinberg as contributing editor for each of its five current year publications. Mr. Weinberg is editor and contributing author of *Integrated Education: Race and Schools*, and author of *Desegregation Research: An Appraisal*; *Race and Place*; and *Man and Society*. He has recently published a comprehensive bibliography, *The Education of the Minority Child*.

Segregated schools exact a high price from white children.

1. Under segregation, minority and majority schools are shortchanged. Quality education is usually measured by academic achievement. High achievement means higher than average achievement, and average achievement must include the very low levels that are tallied in those segregated schools which can offer very limited educational opportunities. White parents have settled for much less than they realize by permitting educational deterioration at the low end of the scale. This produces a tendency for the entire school system to decline.

2. Under segregation, white children are usually subjected to an unrestrained racist education which breeds a false sense of superiority. Not only may they learn to think of minority children and people as less than human; it also becomes harder for them to learn their own potential and talent. Self-knowledge suffers.

3. Under segregation, white children are educated to live in a white world in which blacks, browns and other minorities are invisible. This fundamental distortion of reality ill-prepares children to understand the multi-racial character of American society. It penalizes white

children by omitting vast areas of knowledge from their study and personal acquaintance.

Thus, white children have a large stake in desegregation. How, in fact, have they fared under segregation?

Academic Achievement

In desegregated schools, white children continue to learn at their accustomed rate. This has proved repeatedly to be the case. Here are a few typical examples.

After three years (1968-1971), white children in Evanston, Illinois schools maintained their achievement level.¹

After two years (1967-1969), white children in Hartford, Connecticut, were found to be achieving at their usual rate.²

After three years of desegregation, covering 1966-1969, Riverside, California, school authorities found that white children's achievement did not sag.³

The exact technique of desegregation did not seem to affect learning. In Hartford, none of the white children was bused; in Riverside, very few were; in Evanston a fairly large number were.

Did white children learn at the expense of the black children?

Not at all. In fact, in some instances black children's achievement rate rose so rapidly that it exceeded that of white children. This was the case in Jackson, Michigan, as reported in a study by Katzenmeyer.⁴ Another example was Samuels' study of New Albany, Indiana.⁵ In almost all other cases, the achievement rate of black children rose, even if it did not equal or exceed that of white children. These are excellent instances of productive equality, of achievement at no expense to anyone else.

White parents might well ponder one implication of these studies; *Their children's earlier achievement was not the product of segregation.* Indeed, segregation was not even an advantage for achievement. The separation of white from black or other minority children

was thus not an educational necessity but an incursion of political power in the classroom.

Children were being "used" for political purposes!

Interracial Relations

A desegregated school is one of the few places in American society where persons of varying ethnic groups can cooperate as equals in a benevolent setting. Does it work out this way in practice?

Porter found that in desegregated pre-schools in Boston, five-year old children already had racial conceptions and expressed racially-tinged emotions. Yet, actual play between black and white children went on apace. White boys developed a more positive attitude toward black children than did white girls. "In a quality interracial setting," writes Porter, "white children have an opportunity to have their stereotypes corrected by actual association with blacks..."⁶

Dorothy Singer studied black and white fifth graders in New York state. White children who had frequent contact with black children were more willing to associate with them. On the other hand, white children who had infrequent contact with black children "perceived the Negro in a distorted manner, giving him intellectual credit, but refusing to associate with him."⁷ Kosler and associates found in a study of five schools that when classrooms reflected the racial composition of the schools as a whole that there were "positive relationships between school racial balance and the favorableness of interracial attitudes with any possible effects of socioeconomic status controlled."⁸

Marjorie McDonald, a psychoanalyst in a therapeutic nursery school and kindergarten in Cleveland, concluded after a searching study of the institution: "The racially integrated infant and

WHITE CHILDREN IN THE DESEGREGATION PROCESS by Meyer Weinberg (continued)

pre-schooler gains a special advantage to his own identity formation. He gains a greater thoroughness of resolution of his ordinary developmental conflicts. He gains a greater ability to form and maintain object relationships, including those with members of other races."⁹

Two separate studies — one by Marascuilo and Levin, the other by Koslin and associates — found that children who entered into interracial friendships tended to regard their school in a more positive light.¹⁰

Quality of Interaction

There is no magic in desegregation itself. Simply having black and white children in the same school does not insure constructive cooperation between them. Porter emphasizes the need for "an active attempt to create an atmosphere of interracial tolerance, rather than simply desegregation or racial mixture alone."¹¹

The penalty for schoolmen failing to create such an atmosphere can be very severe. Two separate studies, for example, have been made recently of disorders in urban high schools. Both studies agree that (1) the greatest disorders occurred at schools that recently became desegregated and (2) at nearly all these schools the authorities had not prepared staff, student body, and community for the impending changes.¹²

Intellectual Horizons

In a desegregated school, white children's intellectual horizons are widened. The openness of whites to such enlargement is usually underestimated.

Feagin analyzed responses of a national sample of whites during 1968. He found: "...A majority of white Americans, if a bare majority, see the contributions of Negroes to American history as important... Also unexpected is the substantial support of these whites for school subjects which might stimulate Negro pride."¹³ Caselli evaluated the responses of white seniors in a Santa Rosa, California, high school who had

participated in a unit of black history study lasting six weeks. He found a high level of enthusiasm among the students. "Many students," he reported, "expressed a kind of angry amazement to learn that the educational establishment had not made them aware of these contributions [by blacks] at any time during their prior eleven-plus years of school."¹⁴

Conclusion

Evidence is ample, from research and daily classroom experience, that desegregation can be extraordinarily helpful to children of all races. There is no ground for believing that desegregation is designed to benefit black and Chicano but not white children.

REFERENCES

1. Jaylia Hsia, *Integration in Evanston, 1967-71: A Longitudinal Evaluation* (Evanston, Illinois: Midwestern Office, Educational Testing Service, August, 1971).
2. Aline M. and Thomas W. Mahan, "Changes in Cognitive Style: An Analysis of the Impact of White Suburban Schools on Inner City Children," *Integrated Education*, 8 (1970).
3. Harry Singer, *Effect of Integration on Achievement in Riverside: A Three-Year Trend*, August 31, 1969, p. 10.
4. William G. Katzenmeyer, *Social Interaction and Differences in Intelligence Test Performance of Negro and White Elementary School Pupils* (Doctoral dissertation, Duke University, 1962), University Microfilms Order No. 63-2227.
5. Ivan G. Samuels, *Desegregated Education and Differences in Academic Achievement* (Doctoral dissertation, Indiana University, 1958), University Microfilms Order No. 58-2934.
6. Judith D.R. Porter, *Black Child, White Child. The Development of Racial Attitudes* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 215.
7. Dorothy G. Singer, *Interracial Attitudes of Negro and White Fifth-Grade Children in Segregated and Unsegregated Schools* (Doctoral dissertation, Columbia University, 1966), p. 114.
8. Sandra C. Koslin, Bertram L. Koslin, Richard Pargament, and Harvey Waxman,

"Effects of School Balance on Racial Attitudes," no date, p. 4.

9. Marjorie McDonald, *Not By the Color of Their Skin. The Impact of Racial Differences on the Child's Development* (N.Y.: International Universities Press, 1970), p. 162.
10. Leonard A. Marascuilo and Joel R. Levin, "Inter- and Intra-racial Group Differences in the Perception of a Social Situation," unpublished paper read at the February, 1966, annual meeting of the American Education Research Association; Sandra C. Koslin, Marianne Amarel, and Nancy Ames, "A Distance Measure of Racial Attitudes in Primary Grade Children: An Exploratory Study," *Psychology in the Schools*, October, 1969, p. 385.
11. Porter, p. 214.
12. Robert J. Havighurst, Frank L. Smith, and David E. Wilder, *A Profile of the Large-City High School* (Washington, D.C.: National Association of Secondary School Principals, November, 1970); Stephen K. Bailey, *Disruption in Urban Public Secondary Schools* (Washington, D.C.: National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1971).
13. Joe R. Feagin, "Black History and White Americans," *Integrated Education*, 8 (November-December, 1970), 22-27.
14. Ron Caselli, "White Student Reaction to Black Studies," *Integrated Education*, 8 (September-October, 1970) 31-35.

MATERIALS REVIEWED AND RECOMMENDED

Curriculum Source Book for teaching Mexican-American studies in secondary grades: "A Study Guideline of the History and Culture of the Mexican-American", by Nicholas Rodillas and Morris Eaton, Title I Project Writers, Riverside Unified School District, Riverside, California.

Tape cassettes, audio only, summarizing recent court decisions dealing with desegregation: Juristics Cassette Tapes, 353 East 4th South Street, Salt Lake City, Utah 84111.

Sacramento study on integration giving evidence of academic improvement after desegregation: "An Evaluation Report on a Program of Compensatory Education, E.S.E.A., Title I, Focus on Reading and Mathematics", 1970-71, Sacramento City Unified School District, Sacramento, California.

PUBLICATION CHECKLIST

In-House Bulletins

1. Desegregation and Equal Educational Opportunities: Local Dilemmas and Government Mandates (Arrowhead).
2. Attitudes Toward School Desegregation in Riverside and Redlands.
3. School Desegregation and Busing: Guidelines for Transportation Administrators.
4. Critical Decisions Incident to School Desegregation.

Contract Bulletins

1. Education for Cultural Awareness by Dr. Roger Baty.
2. Public School Desegregation in California, Historical Background by Nathaniel Colley, Esq.

3. "The Coleman Report Says . . . , Equality of Educational Opportunity — Analysis and Political Implications by Dr. James Guthrie and Paula Morrelli.
4. School Desegregation and Community Conflict by Dr. R.W. Holland.
5. Resources for Planning and Implementing School Desegregation by Mr. Eugene Mornell and Mr. Joseph Payne.
6. Desegregation Strategies — The Classroom and The Courtroom by Dr. Neil Sullivan.
7. Bilingual/Bicultural Education: A Quest for Institutional Reform by Dr. Atilano Valencia.

Send requests for materials to:

Information Dissemination Module
Room 2101B, Watkins Hall
University of California
Riverside, CA. 92502

From the Editor:

The Intergroup Newsletter will be published every six weeks during the school year. Its purpose is to keep our readers informed in matters of school desegregation and integration. If something of general interest is happening in your school district we should like to hear about it so that the information can be passed along and perhaps used by other educators.

The services of the Western Regional School Desegregation Projects in planning, implementing and evaluating school desegregation are available to you on request.

Kathleen Siggers, Ed.D.
Associate Director
Information Dissemination

intergroup

ROOM 2101, WATKINS HALL
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA 92502

Non-Profit Org.
U. S. POSTAGE

PAID

Permit No. 131
Riverside, Calif.

NOV 30 1977

2 1 97403 WATS---C WRSDP I
CLARICE WATSON
ERIC ACQUISITIONS LIBRARIAN
UNIVERSITY OF OREGON
EUGENE OR 97403